

11 April 1952

(Friday)

MEMORANDUM FOR: All Hands, OCD

SUBJECT: The Big Move

1. Last weekend was a memorable one. We had chosen it as offering the best chance, though only a slim one, of getting staff, equipment and files uprooted from M-Building and transplanted in the Stadium without seriously interrupting the services which we must provide.

2. Most large offices, when they move, are able to lock up their desks and file-cabinets, and sit back with folded hands while the appointed people move them into the new location and make all things ready so that the work can start up again. But we could not do this. Because our job is to provide a variety of services on an hour-to-hour basis. If we'd chosen to take the weekend off while the movers did the job, we'd have found ourselves on Monday morning in a state of chaos. Mailbags would have been piled high in corridors and corners; no one would have known where to find his desk, typewriter and files; the In-Baskets in other offices and staffs would have been empty; and the telephones would have been ringing wildly. It seemed impossible, on Friday, that any amount of effort could prevent us from finding ourselves in that condition by Monday morning. But, thanks to you, the seemingly inevitable was avoided.

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3. Of the [redacted] people, more or less, who were involved in the move I think that less than 50% just drifted with the tide. More than half, surely, wrestled with chairs, desks, typewriters and files in a manner never contemplated in their job descriptions; while a smaller number of men and women, of all pay grades, sweated voluntarily in dungarees and work clothes till midnight each evening. They, certainly, were "Prime Movers", and the Agency owes them much. By Monday noon we were organized in the new location, and operating almost at usual efficiency. Several people with long experience in government have said to me that they would not have believed it possible if they hadn't seen it with their own eyes.

4. By and large, conditions in the Stadium are better than I had dared to hope; but my expectations were certainly not high and it is a fact that there are many defects to be corrected. Change, in itself, is a defect when it breaks in upon the kind of concentrated reading and study which most of you are doing, and time and a period of adjustment are the only remedies. But these will not solve everything, and there are concrete defects which we will deal with one by one and as fast as we can. I am exceedingly grateful to the vast majority of you who have perceived that this painful move was really the only immediately available solution to our space problem, and who are having the patience to keep the wheels turning while we work at correcting the defects.

5. You are an exceptionally fine group of people, and it will always be a personal satisfaction to me that I've had the privilege of serving with you.

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